

# AUTUMN VESPER

Words by EMILY BRONTË (1818-1848)  
Music and additional words by AUDREY SNYDER

Emily Brontë lived the majority of her short life in a small village in northern England with her father, brother and two sisters, Charlotte and Anne. As young women, the three sisters decided to publish some of the poems they had written. At that time women were generally expected to sew, cook and clean house. They were definitely not expected to write poetry or novels for publication. The Brontë sisters decided to use pen names to make it appear that they were men. They made up names which kept their same initials, C.B., E.B., and A.B. Their book of poetry entitled *Poems* by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell was published in 1846.

In 1847 the sisters each published a novel: Charlotte's *Jane Eyre*, Anne's *Agnes Grey* and Emily's *Wuthering Heights*. Over the years, all three novels became immensely popular. Sadly, Emily died a year after the novels were published never knowing that she and her sisters came to be considered among the world's most famous writers.

*Song of Autumn* celebrates the ecstasy of a beautiful autumn evening. The words are from the close of a very long poem entitled *Written in Aspin Castle* which Emily began while on a trip to Belgium. The poem was finished a month or two after her return to England. For this setting, alterations and additions have been made to the poem. The original is reproduced here.

O come away! the Norman door  
Is silvered with a sudden shine:  
Come, leave these dreams o'er things of yore  
And turn to Nature's face divine.

O'er wood and wold, o'er flood and fell,  
O'er flashing lake and gleaming dell,  
The harvest moon looks down;  
And when heaven smiles with love and light,  
And earth looks back so dazzling bright –  
In such a scene, on such a night,  
Earth's children should not frown.

Since all language evolves over time, several of the words which Emily Brontë used regularly are no longer in common, everyday use today. The following definitions may be helpful.

<i>wood</i>	a forest
<i>wold</i>	rolling uplands or plain
<i>flood</i>	a body of flowing water such as a river
<i>fell</i>	a hill or mountain
<i>dell</i>	a small wooded valley

Beyond practice and performance a discussion of the essence of the poetry may be very beneficial. Topics for discussion will vary, but may include Emily Brontë's many references to facial countenance, e.g. "harvest moon looks down," as well as numerous references to aspects of light, e.g. "flashing lake."

This piece should be performed very legato with some rhythmic freedom. Careful attention should be paid to the shaping of phrases and purity of vowel sounds.

for Dr. William Maier, in gratitude  
**AUTUMN VESPER\***  
 Three-Part Mixed, accompanied

Words by EMILY BRONTË

Music and additional words by  
 AUDREY SNYDER

**Legato, with some rhythmic freedom** (♩ = ca. 76) *rit.* *unison mp a tempo*

I  
 II

O - ver

**Legato, with some rhythmic freedom** (♩ = ca. 76) *rit.* *a tempo*

PIANO *mp*

3

wood and wold, o-ver flood and fell, O-ver flash - ing lake and

*mp*

*continue sim.*

\*Vesper: Evening

SV9411

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I II

*slight rit.* *mf* *a tempo* *decresc. slight rit.*

gleam - ing dell, The har - vest moon looks down, the

III

*slight rit.* *mf* *a tempo* *decresc. slight rit.*

*slight rit.* *a tempo mf* *decresc. slight rit.*

7

*mp* *a tempo unis.* **11**

har - vest moon looks down. And when heav - en smiles with

*mp* *a tempo*

*mp* *a tempo* **11**

*continue sim.*

love and light, And earth looks back so dazz - ling bright, In

*mp* *a tempo*

15 *mf* *slight rit.* *decresc.*  
 such a scene, on such a night, Earth's chil - dren should not

*mf* *slight rit.* *decresc.*

15 *mf* *slight rit.* *decresc.*

*mp* *a tempo*  
 The har-vest moon casts a mag - i - cal glow, en -  
 frown. *mf* 19 *mp*  
 Har - vest moon\_ casts a mag - i - cal glow,

*mp* *a tempo* *mp*

19 *a tempo* *mp*

chant - ing all the world be - low. 23 *mf cresc.*  
 En - chant - ing all be - low. Bathed in a sil - vered  
*mf cresc.*

23 *mf* *cresc.*

shine, Be - hold na - ture's face di - vine. —

*f* *rit.* *mp*

*f* *rit.* *mp*

*p* *unis. mf* [28] *a tempo*

And when heav - en smiles with love and light, And

*a tempo* *mf*

[28] *a tempo* *mf*

continue sim.

earth looks back so daz - ling bright, In such a scene, on

*slight rit.* [32] *a tempo*

*slight rit.* *a tempo*

[32] *slight rit.* *a tempo*

\*Use cue notes instead, or as additional harmony if range is not a problem.

*slight rit.* *decesc.* *mp*

such a night, Earth's chil - dren should not frown, earth's chil - dren should not

*slight rit.* *decesc.* *mp*

*slight rit.* *decesc.* *mp*

**A little slower**

When the har - vest moon looks down, earth's

*mf* *mp*

frown. Har - vest moon looks down, earth's chil - dren

**A little slower**

*mf* *mp*

*rit.* *unis.* *a tempo* *rit.*

should not frown.

*rit.* *a tempo* *rit.*

*rit.* *a tempo* *rit. e decresc.* *molto rit.* *p*

*gva*

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